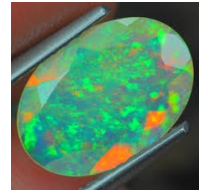


GEMS



The Official Publication of Retired Educators Association of Idaho

Volume 25 Number 2

April 1, 2018

President's Message

At the April, 2017 State Board meeting, it was decided to create Co-Presidents. Elaine Klein moved from President-Elect to President. I was elected as her Co-President. We regret to inform our members that Elaine passed away recently. She will be missed for her kindness and her professionalism.

Connie Bunch has resigned as Ex-

ecutive Secretary. She too will be missed for her enthusiasm for the Association. The membership has been made aware of the open position.

It is time to update the Constitution. If you are interested in helping please contact me at [208-229-4561](tel:208-229-4561) or [Bearconsul@aol.com](mailto: Bearconsul@aol.com)

Submitted by:
Barbara Blausch
President

Executive Secretary's Message

March came in like a lion, at least here in Treasure Valley. Snow yesterday and partly cloudy today with warming temperatures in store. I'm ready!

Thursday, March 1st, about a dozen of our BKM members attended the service for Elaine Klein, out state co-president. As I had shared with you right after her passing, she had had an amazing career and received many awards for her work in education. We only knew her after the fact, but she had shared much of her career history with me. I wish I had known her in her prime! I will miss her radiant smile and her pres-

ence at our meetings.

This is a fairly quiet time of year for me in terms of REAL activities. I'm helping a bit with the SW Region's conference plans, the agenda for which is found on the Current News page of the website. I'll put the other conference agendas there when I receive them. Jerry and I will be attending the North and SE conferences and are looking forward to seeing "old" and new friends.

In the meantime, I wish you all a happy St. Patrick's Day, and a joy-filled Easter.

Submitted by:
Connie J. Bunch,
Executive Secretary, REAL
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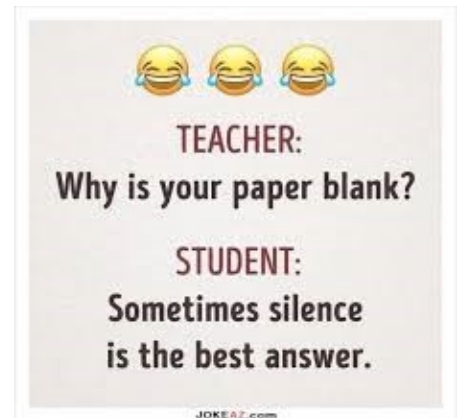
LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Idaho Representatives:

Rep. Raul Labrador 202-225-6611, 888-3188, www.labrador.house.gov
Rep. Mike Simpson 202-225-5531, 334-1953, www.simpson.house.gov
Sen. Mike Crapo 202-224-6142, 334-1776, www.crapo.senate.gov
Sen. Jim Risch 202-224-2752, 342-7985, www.risch.senate.gov

BE STRONG, SPEAK UP

Submitted by:
Barb Blasch
Legislative Chair



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TRAVEL ADVENTURES

THE COLORS OF NEW ENGLAND IS OUR NEXT TRIP. IT IS SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 11-18, 2018, WITH COLLETE TRAVEL. BROCHURES WERE DISTRIBUTED AT THE STATE BOARD MEETING TO ALL THE UNIT PRESIDENTS. THE DEPOSIT DATE IS APRIL 4, 2018, AND THE FINAL PAYMENT IS AUGUST 12, 2018. A MEETING WAS HELD ON JANUARY 23, 2018 AT THE HOME OF CONNIE BUNCH. AT THAT TIME THE COLLETTE REPRESENTATIVE, LAURA HERNANDEZ, PRESENTED INFORMATION ABOUT THE NEW ENGLAND TRIP AND THE 2020 TRIP TO OBERAMMERGAU FOR THE PASSION PLAY. AT THE MEETING IN IT WAS DECIDED THAT I WILL PRESENT FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE TRIP TO OBERAMMAERGAU AT THE APRIL CONFERENCES TO SEE IF THERE IS ENOUGH INTEREST IN THE TRIP. A TENTATIVE TRIP HAS BEEN PLANNED FOR 2019. IT IS THE MARITIME COASTAL WONDERS. THIS INCLUDES NOVA SCOTIA, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND, AND CAPE BRETON ISLAND. I WILL ALSO SEE IF THERE IS ENOUGH INTEREST IN THIS TRIP AT THE APRIL CONFERENCES. IF THERE IS, I WILL BE MEETING WITH LAURA AGAIN THE FIRST WEEK OF MAY TO FINALIZE OUR TRAVEL PLANS FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS.

Margaret Reimer
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reimem8@gmail.com



Squaw Butte REA

The past two months have gone by in a flash. Despite the winter weather our January and February meetings/lunches have been very well attended. Our focus on building bonds of friendship, service, helping the teachers and students of Gem County our numbers continue to grow.

On January 22, 2018 we met at the Presbyterian Church for another fantastic lunch prepared by Sharon Holford and her crew. Our raffle theme to benefit our classroom scholarship fund was "regifting." The selection of rehomed gifts was astounding. Our January meeting is our chance to show our support for our favorite college or university.

Sitting here this morning, I can not think of better way to share the information about our January speaker then to probably break the rules and share a slightly edited version of our minutes written by our amazing recording secretary Sue Gunter.

"Mike Maglish, CEO of INside OUT, an organization focused on human trafficking. It is the only organization in Idaho that works with minors and their exploitation.

Mike and his wife, Dawn, started INside OUT in 2011 "to bring awareness and understanding of human trafficking to our communities instilling a commitment for action to benefit those impacted."

The pillars of the organization are awareness, advocacy, and action. There are monthly training events, community partnerships and a beauty salon in Eagle. INside OUT provides programs in detention centers trains adults for mentors and trains adults who provide in home care. A Diversion program teaches trafficking awareness and principles of a healthy lifestyle. The Diversion program is designed for high risk youth who are referred by H and W, Courts or Probation.

- ◆ Support options for action: be a volunteer, donate your skills to meet a need, pledge \$20.00 monthly, create a legacy gift, or make a salon appointment for haircut...or more! The salon is located at 591 E. State St., Eagle.

Lower Snake River REA

No news to report.

Submitted by:

Linda Carpenter

- ◆ Human trafficking is one of the fastest growing crimes found worldwide. The average victim is 12-14 years of age. Pres. Trump declared human trafficking a national crisis. January is human trafficking prevention month. INside OUT is the only Idaho organization that is dedicated to this issue.

Additional information is available on the INside OUT website: www.insideoutcares.org.

Now for a shameless author's note, human trafficking is here in Idaho, not is far away 3rd world countries and large cities. Mr. Maglish, without giving away details, told of cases in the Treasure Valley. He also explained how predators can target children while they are sitting next to their parents in their homes while using social media and smart phones. Although INsideOUT focus on girls under the age of 18, boys are also trafficked. These are your children, grandchildren, neighbors, and students at risk.

On February 26, we once again met at the Presbyterian Church in Emmett for a great lunch with friends and colleagues. We collected money and books for Gem County school libraries.

Our speaker was Becky from the BBB. While talking about a very serious subject, Becky proved to be a fun, entertaining speaker. Sadly, so many people are defrauded, and the scammers are very good at their "job". My take away was: check your account often and then check it again. There are apps that can disguise phone numbers, do NOT give any personal information, no matter how small, scammers are persistent, and they will keep calling or contacting you. Honest people do not ask for payment in Walmart or any other type of gift cards. Do not click on links or open site you do not know. When in doubt, call the BBB or the police.

For our raffle, we brought books to share and exchange.

Please keep in your prayers or positive thoughts the family of Don Gregory. Don was an amazing teacher and coach at Emmett High School who lost his battle with cancer. He was also a good friend, mentor, role model, husband, and father.

Submitted by:
Betty Griffith



In the final days of summer vacation, teachers make their critical student trades.

Retired Educators of North Central Idaho- RENCI

Our little taste of spring has disappeared on this snowy day in north central Idaho. What we thought was warm weather, birds singing, and the thought of short trips into the countryside has disappeared. Outside my window now are huge flakes of snow falling from the sky.

On days like this, it is just better to curl up with your warm blanket, a cup of your favorite hot beverage, and a good book. If you have been to our last couple of meetings, you would have many books to choose select as we had a "It's in a Book Club" discussion of our current and favorite books led by one of our own members, Marilyn Feeney. We all came away with a list of books that interested us and some of us grabbed a book or two that were given away for free. What a way to brighten up a cold January.

And in February, if you needed more to read, we had Dan Miller, a retired medical doctor, talk to us about his book "A Little Patch of Idaho". He wrote the book to keep himself busy during his retirement as he had to have something to do. It is about the Craig Mountain area between Lewiston and Grangeville.

In March we will detour from our reading and be creative with making living Easter Baskets, which are baskets featuring plants and decorative items from one of our local garden centers. Our executive board will also travel to the Coeur d'Alene Casino and Resort on March 13 to meet with our colleagues from NIREA to coordinate the upcoming regional meeting in Lewiston. It always a good lunch and good visit with them.

Happy Spring whenever it comes and good reading!

Submitted by:
Pat Hoch
RENCI co-president

NIREA-North Idaho Retired Educators

The retired educators of North Idaho met in January and February at the Post Falls Senior Center. The program speaker for January was David Townsend from the Coeur d'Alene Public Library. His presentation included a slide show and information from a recent trip to Sweden. It was an enjoyable program that featured historic buildings and beautiful countryside. Ken and Ginger Wright added to the program by displaying souvenirs they had collected from many trips to Sweden to visit family.

In February we heard from Bill Brooks (The Consumer Guy). Bill writes a regular column in the Coeur d' Alene Press that features current scams that people in the

area need to be aware of and cautious about. He had many tips about how to deal with the scammers. He also has a tip line and encourages people to call if they need further assistance or to report current scams. Bill entertained us with his stories about scammers and about his personal life.

A committee from NIREA will meet with representatives from RENCI on March 13 to coordinate plans for our regional conference to be held in Lewiston on April 11. We collected money for the area food banks. January went to Coeur d'Alene, February to the Silver Valley.

That's it from North Idaho! We are looking forward to the end of snow season and some Spring weather.

Submitted by:
Doug Cresswell, Co-President

SEIREA

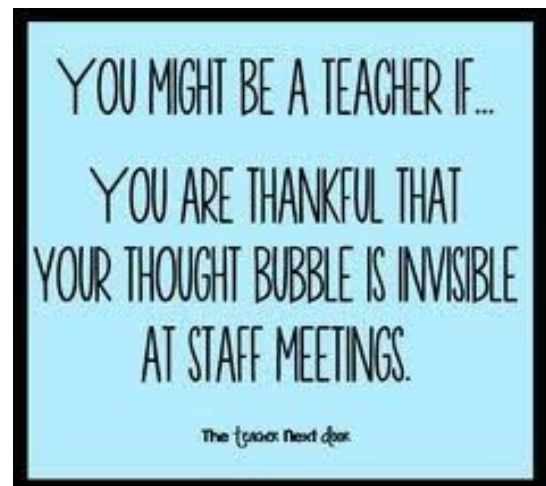
No news to report.

Submitted by:
Mary Ann Hansen, Secretary

IDAHO FALLS REA

No news to report.

Submitted by:
Chris Blower
President



BOISE, KUNA, MERIDIAN REA-(REA-BKM)

As I see it, the crocus and daffodils emerging from my flower beds should have taken Punxsutawney Phil seriously on February 2nd and stayed submerged for six more weeks of winter! I'm hoping the return of winter here in the Treasure Valley won't spell their demise.

The Boise, Kuna, Meridian unit of REA is welcoming four new members to its group. Additionally, it is entertaining a good number of luncheon guests who are interested in the workings of our organization. It is great to see new faces as we continue our focus on membership building and viable presence in our community.

The months of January and February have been active ones for our BKM Unit. At our meeting on January 9th, BKM members engaged in an activity inspired by NRTA's Tom Nichols whose presentation at the April, 2017 State Convention focused on writing letters to elected officials. The activity, led by Margaret Reimer, walked members through the process of effective letter writing. Letters contributed by members for delivery to their elected official were collected and hand carried to their intended recipient's local office.

Western Regional Conference

April 17, 2018 (in Boise)
9:00-4:00

Registration begins at 9:00 a.m. followed by a day of great speakers from AMBA, AARP, and PERSI sharing new information with us. Reverend Robert Walters will be our guest speaker. He will be speaking on Prison Ministry. Willis Carr will be singing some western songs and Scott Rhead will share some cowboy poetry! Western Region Units will share their outstanding programs of the year and a lunch consisting of baked pota-

Twin Falls REA

Beginning the new year, MVREAL continues to meet at the local Idaho Pizza Company restaurant. Our presenter for January was Randy Wastradowski, the new CEO of the Twin Falls "Y". It was discovered over the last couple of years that funds appeared or should I say disappeared. It turned out to be poor protocols, rather than a criminal endeavor. Randy was hired to rebuild the programs and restore the "Y"s image. I believe he is doing that quite well. Anyway, he impressed us with his plans for programs and the restructuring the Y's business practices. He also pointed out the need for improving the perceptions of the Community, and the need for financial support by the Community. I am certain that he will succeed.

A valentine exchange and Dr. Janet Worthington as Abigail Adams were the highlights of our February 13th meeting. I saw many smiles and members' faces light up when presented with a simple paper valentine by a BKM friend. Our program of the day, delivered by Janet Worthington in period costume as Abigail Adams, dramatically portrayed the role played by the wife and closest confidant of President John Adams.

As I prepare to submit this article for the next GEMS publication, I am informed of the passing of Elaine Klein, our BKM Immediate Past President. She succumbed on February 23 to the lung cancer that rudely robbed her of the future she anticipated with friends and family and the opportunities she saw for empowering others through the strength of education. We mourn her loss and extend sincere condolence to her loving family.

Submitted by:
Jane Brewer
REA BKM President
j_brewer@outlook.com

to bar, coleslaw, and fresh fruit salad will be served.

Registration forms have been sent to the Western Region Presidents. Check with them for a form, fill it out and join us for a fun day of information, music, and comradery.

If you did not receive a registration form and would like to receive a form, please contact me.

Charlotte Moore,
Western Regional Conference Chairwoman
chmoore42@gmail.com

For February, the Twin Falls School District invited us to tour the new South Hills Middle School here in Twin Falls. Of course it was also a chance to promote their upcoming facilities and maintenance levee for the Twin Falls District. It was President's Day, so we didn't have to dodge the kids. The new school is impressive. We were also impressed with the security restrictions at the school entrance. That is one of the needs for the levy is to update security at all schools, especially the older schools.

This month a local accountant is going to inform us of the impact of the new income tax legislation, and all the money we will save, even if our bridges collapse.

Submitted by:
Edward Arndt
President